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HECB awards funds to boost enrollment in high-demand fields

OLYMPIA- The state's public four-year colleges and universities will share \$8.2 million in state funding over the next two years to help them expand student enrollments in high-demand fields. The funds were awarded Wednesday (July 30) by the Higher Education Coordinating Board.

The additional dollars were awarded through a competitive process to help the schools respond to growing demand from students and employers in certain fields of study, including health care, teaching, and information technology. Funding for high-demand enrollments was included in the 2003-05 state operating budget to address two key issues: student demand for some programs is outpacing availability, and employers are having a harder time finding qualified applicants to fill high-skill job openings.

The two-year operating budget directed the HECB to coordinate a competitive application process among the public four-year college and universities and included a total of \$8.2 million to support 246 new full-time student slots (FTEs) in 2003-04 and an additional 254 new FTEs (for a total of 500) in 2004-05.

By the July 18 deadline, the HECB had received 37 proposals from the state's six four-year institutions and five branch campuses. A total of 500 full-time enrollments are authorized for funding in the next two academic years, but the available funds may be stretched to support more enrollments than the Legislature initially contemplated. Applicants were asked to address such issues as how their program would respond to statewide or regional economic needs and opportunities, and to demonstrate that students in the programs would be sought by employers in Washington state.

The agency's review committee included representatives from the private- and public-sector experts in information technology, biotechnology, health care, education, economic development and labor market analysis.

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Note: The projects approved by the HECB are described below and listed on a table that displays enrollments and funding for each of the next two academic years. The enrollment totals listed with the project descriptions are for the second year of the state budget cycle, 2004-05.

Central Washington University

Middle Level Math/Science Endorsement - 20 FTE

This program at the Ellensburg campus will respond to the state's need for more middle school teachers who have strong math and science training. This program will come before the State Board of Education for approval in August 2003, so the review committee recommends that HECB funding be contingent on the SBE's approval.

'Career Switcher' teaching certificate in secondary mathematics - 30 FTE

This innovative program, based at the university's Lynnwood Center at Edmonds Community College, recruits laid-off aerospace engineers and others with strong math backgrounds to become high school math teachers. One of the reasons this program has a low state per-FTE cost (less than \$4,000 per FTE) is because other funding is available to offset some program development and public information costs.

Bachelor of Science in Safety and Health Management - 12 FTE

Funding will enable CWU to expand this existing program by offering an evening program at its Lynnwood Center. Graduates will perform three general functions for industry: (1) evaluating the effectiveness of existing safety and health programs; (2) organizing and training employees for disaster and emergency response; and (3) managing business and industry safety programs.

Special Education and English as a Second Language - 25 FTE

This program will produce special education teaching graduates who have a minor in English as a Second Language. The program responds to a well-documented increase in special education students whose native language is not English. Nationally, it is estimated that nearly 40 percent of special education students come from non-English speaking families, but fewer than 15 percent of teachers are from similar backgrounds.

Eastern Washington University

Computing and Engineering Sciences - 38 FTE

This project will expand several programs in EWU's School of Computing and Engineering Sciences, including computer science, engineering technology and multimedia design, physics and electrical engineering. This proposal has received strong industry support and endorsements from community and technical colleges.

Doctorate of Physical Therapy - 8 FTE

Funding will enable the university to expand the DPT program in 2004-05 at the branch campus in Spokane in recognition of strong demand among students and employers. This proposal responds directly to one of the Spokane Area Economic Development Council's key strategies for improving the region's economic strength.

University of Washington

Bachelor of Science in Bioengineering - 30 FTE

Funding will enable the UW to expand the bioengineering program to a total of 79 FTE by 2004-05. Demand among students has been very strong, but this fall, for example, the university had space to admit only six of the 50 entering students who formally requested bioengineering as their major. Meanwhile, the employment of biomedical engineers is predicted to increase by nearly one-third in this decade.

Bachelor of Science in Computing and Software Systems - 30 FTE

Funding will enable the UW to expand its program at the Institute of Technology at the branch campus in Tacoma. Applications and information inquiries demonstrate strong student demand for the institute's program, and employment growth in Washington is projected to increase by more than 3 percent per year from 2005 through 2010.

Bachelor of Science in Nursing - 32 FTE

The university proposes to expand its current undergraduate degree program by approximately 20 percent per year, with half of the new enrollments in each of the next two years. Demand for nursing among UW students is at an all-time high - this year the School of Nursing received 406 applications for 80 available slots in the BS Nursing program. Among employers, the state's Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission describes the shortage of nurses as the No. 1 issue affecting the profession.

Washington State University

Computer Science and Mechanical Engineering - 50 FTE

One of the strongest high-demand proposals calls for expansion of WSU's branch campus in Vancouver calls for funding in 2004-05 to develop bachelors and master's degrees in mechanical engineering and a bachelor's degree in computer science. The proposal was initiated by local industries and endorsed by virtually all economic development organizations in Southwest Washington, and reflects partnerships with Clark and Lower Columbia community colleges, which will work with WSU to serve many of the students who enter these programs. The Legislature provided startup funding (but not enrollment funds) to WSU for this project in the 2003-05 budget. Clark and Lower Columbia colleges received funds for 168 two-year college FTEs.

Bachelor of Science in Nursing - 65 FTE

This proposal calls for the expansion of WSU's BS in nursing program through enrollment increases in Spokane and Yakima, and by extending the program to the Tri-Cities branch campus. The university presented strong documentation of the need for additional trained nurses in Eastern Washington and the near-doubling of student enrollment pressure in the last two years.

Doctor of Pharmacy - 46 FTE

The state needs more pharmacists almost as much as it needs more nurses. This proposal calls for the addition of 23 FTE in each of the next two years - an increase of about 20 percent per year - to respond to student and employer demand. Among students, enrollment in the pre-pharmacy program at WSU has more than quadrupled (from 60 FTE to 260 FTE) in the last three years. In a recent survey, more than half of the acute care hospitals in the state said it was very difficult to recruit licensed pharmacists.

Bachelor of Science in Horticulture - Viticulture and Enology - 45 FTE

This very strong proposal from WSU builds on the funding provided by the 2003 Legislature for first-year startup of a Washington-focused program in grape-growing and winemaking. WSU is working closely with the wine industry and community colleges in the Tri-Cities, Yakima and Walla Walla to develop the state's first bachelor's-level program in this field. Wine industry representatives have worked closely with WSU to develop and refine this proposal, which was discussed extensively during the recently completed legislative session. In the WSU budget, the Legislature said it "expects" the university to make a successful bid for high-demand funding.

Western Washington University**Bachelor of Science in Computer Science - 50 FTE**

This funding will enable WWU to add 25 FTE to its computer science program in each of the next two years, an expansion that will be aided by the program's upcoming move into the university's new Communications Building, which is scheduled to open next year.

Manufacturing and Supply Chain Management - 16 FTE

The hallmark of this excellent proposal is the university's strong connection to a wide cross-section of manufacturing employers who assist in program development and hire the university's graduates. This funding will enable expansion of the current 24-FTE program to a total of 40 FTE by 2004-05. This is an example of a program for which student and employer demand remains very strong despite the state's sluggish economy.

Special Education Program - 20 FTE

This proposal will increase by 50 percent the number of trained special education teachers who graduate each year from Western Washington University. In addition to its national accreditation, the special education program recently was granted full approval by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction under the new state standards for performance-based teacher preparation as described in the Washington Education Reform Act.

Technical Writing - 9 FTE

With this funding, the WWU English Department will expand enrollment in its program in technical and professional communications, which builds on the university's core mission as a liberal arts institution. Nearly one-third of the university's English graduates now find work as technical writers and editors, and many of the other WWU students who take technical writing courses are majoring in such subjects as engineering technology, geology, journalism and chemistry.

Higher Education Coordinating Board
2003-05 High Demand Enrollment Grants

Univ.	Program	Full-time enrollments (FTE)			State Funding			Per FTE Cost	
		New 03-04	New 04-05	Total 04-05	2003-04	2004-05	2003-05 Total	2003-04	2004-05
CWU	Middle Level Math/Science Endorsement	20	0	20	\$223,420	\$156,070	\$379,490	\$11,171	\$7,804
CWU	Career Switcher/Secondary Mathematics Teaching	30	0	30	117,960	104,994	222,954	3,932	3,500
CWU	Safety & Health Management	12	0	12	87,992	79,992	167,984	7,333	6,666
CWU	Special Education & ESL	0	25	25	18,480	71,275	89,755		2,851
EWU	Doctorate of Physical Therapy	0	8	8	20,179	75,821	96,000		9,478
EWU	Computing/Engineering Sciences	32	6	38	352,000	418,000	770,000	11,000	11,000
UW	BS Nursing	16	16	32	128,145	327,516	455,661	8,009	10,235
UW	Bioengineering	15	15	30	212,071	407,202	619,273	14,138	13,573
UW	Computer & Software Systems	10	20	30	79,040	237,120	316,160	7,904	7,904
WSU	BS Horticulture -- Viticulture/Enology	8	37	45	0	666,965	666,965		14,821
WSU	Pharmacy	23	23	46	404,433	524,553	928,986	17,584	11,403
WSU	BS Nursing	25	40	65	407,511	673,512	1,081,023	16,300	10,362
WSU	Computer Science & Mechanical Engineering	0	50	50	0	662,500	662,500		13,250
WWU	Special Education	20	0	20	160,000	140,000	300,000	8,000	7,000
WWU	Computer Science	25	25	50	325,000	650,000	975,000	13,000	13,000
WWU	Manufacturing & Supply Chain Management	6	10	16	83,400	222,400	305,800	13,900	13,900
WWU	Technical Writing	5	4	9	45,600	82,080	127,680	9,120	9,120
Total Recommendation		247	279	526	\$2,665,231	\$5,500,000	\$8,165,231	\$10,790	\$10,456
Funds Available for Grants		246	254	500	2,705,000	5,500,000	8,205,000	11,000 (avg.)	11,000 (avg.)
(Over) Under		(1)	(25)	(26)	\$39,769	\$0	\$39,769	\$210	\$544

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